

TURKEY RIGHTS MONITOR



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ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ARREST

Throughout the week, prosecutors ordered the detention of at least 34 people over alleged links to the Gülen movement. In October 2020, a UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) [opinion](#) said that widespread or systematic imprisonment of individuals with alleged links to the group may amount to crimes against humanity. Solidarity with OTHERS has compiled a detailed [database](#) to monitor the Gülen-linked mass detentions since a failed coup in July 2016.

8 December: UN special rapporteurs [warned](#) that Turkey is arbitrarily jailing university students, women and even minors as “terrorists” under an unlawfully broad terrorism label applied to the Gülen movement, citing mass raids in 2024 and 2025 where peaceful activities like studying, tutoring and family life were criminalised in violation of international human rights law.

ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION OF LIFE

8 December: Süleyman Yıldırım, a 59-year-old Turkish lawyer imprisoned on alleged Gülen movement links, [died](#) after months of denial of adequate medical care in prison, including delayed treatment that led to leg amputation and advanced lung cancer, despite repeated medical reports and international calls for his release.

15 December: Mehmet Çatakli, a 51-year-old man jailed while awaiting trial in the Gülen movement - related case criticised last week by UN special rapporteurs, [died](#) of a heart attack in İstanbul’s Marmara Prison.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

No news has emerged of [Yusuf Bilge Tunc](#), a former public sector worker who was sacked from his job by a decree-law during the 2016-2018 state of emergency and who was reported missing as of August 6, 2019, in what appears to be one of the latest cases in a string of suspected [enforced disappearance](#) of government critics since 2016.

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

13 December: A Turkish court [ordered](#) the closure of the Young LGBTQ+ Association in İzmir over alleged obscenity in social media posts, despite prosecutors earlier deciding not to pursue criminal charges.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND MEDIA

11 December: Turkish journalist Enver Aysever was [arrested](#) on charges of “inciting hatred and enmity” over remarks made on his YouTube channel criticising right-wing ideology, despite later saying his comments were misrepresented.

13 December: Hidayet Karaca, a former journalist and ex-head of the Samanyolu Media Group, has [completed](#) 11 years in prison in Turkey, serving multiple life and lengthy sentences widely criticised as politically motivated despite an ECtHR ruling that his detention violated his rights.

14 December: Turkish journalist Osman Çaklı was [detained](#) over a social media post about an attack on an Istanbul hospital, facing accusations of “praising crime and criminals” and “insulting the president,” according to MLSA (Media and Law Studies Association).

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE & RULE OF LAW

11 December: The Council of Europe's human rights commissioner [warned](#) after a December visit that Turkey's ongoing restrictions on freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, civil society and judicial independence are incompatible with European human rights standards and urged Ankara to restore safeguards and implement ECtHR rulings.

11 December: Turkish authorities [arrested](#) lawyer Naim Eminoğlu in İstanbul on alleged Gülen movement links days after he publicly opposed sentence reductions for those responsible for deadly 2023 earthquake negligence, a move condemned by international legal organizations as politically motivated.

KURDISH MINORITY

9 December: A Turkish court [sentenced](#) Kurdish folk singer Pinar Aydınlar to six years and three months in prison on PKK-related terrorism charges despite the prosecutor seeking her acquittal.

PRISON CONDITIONS

11 December: Human rights groups [said](#) at least 2,335 people died from right-to-life violations in Turkey in the first 11 months of 2025, citing preventable deaths, custodial abuses, mass detentions and a broad deterioration in fundamental rights.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

12 December: A 17-year-old vocational high school intern allegedly [became](#) pregnant after sexual abuse while working at the Turkish Parliament cafeteria and later ended the pregnancy, as prosecutors arrested a parliament staff member on child sexual harassment charges amid ongoing investigations.